

Mr. DURBIN. Yes. The Senator is going to try to do it in the 20 minutes that was in the UC request, allocating an equal amount of time to the Senator from Missouri.

Mr. KERRY. Mr. President, if the Senator will yield just for the purposes of asking something.

Mr. DURBIN. Yes.

Mr. KERRY. Will the Senator from Kentucky agree to a 20-minute time period on the Senator from Illinois' amendment?

Mr. FORD. Mr. President, since it has been laid on me—and I do not mind that at all. I have always heard when you tear the hide off it comes back—you are tougher. And I will agree to the 20 minutes. I do not want to, but I will agree to it.

All I hear for the last week is banging my State and my farmers and my tobacco. And I think I ought to have an opportunity to defend myself and my people. If I am going to be limited to 10 minutes, you know, I am not sure that my colleague and I, with 5 minutes each, can do it adequately. We can do as well as anybody else in 5 minutes.

But I hope they would give some consideration to it.

Mr. President, I will agree to the 20 minutes equally divided, since I have used 5.

Mr. KERRY. I thank the Senator.

Mr. DURBIN. I want to make certain, Mr. President, that I understand. Is this time being taken from the time allocated on my position on the amendment?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Time is being charged to the Senator from Illinois.

Mr. DURBIN. I hope we can reach agreement quickly then. And I yield for the purpose of a question to the Senator from Delaware. I believe the chairman has a suggestion.

Mr. ROTH. I suggest that we proceed with my proposal, Senator DURBIN having 20 minutes equally divided; Senator NICKLES 10 minutes divided; Senator GRAMM 20 minutes divided; and then Senator KERRY of Massachusetts 20 minutes divided.

Mr. DORGAN. Reserving the right to object, Mr. President.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Dakota.

Mr. DORGAN. Reserving the right to object, and I will not object, but I do want at this point to try to understand the circumstances.

When the time has expired on this bill—that will occur I guess in an hour and a half or 2 hours, less than 2 hours—I am wondering what the intentions of the chairman and the ranking member are with respect to further proceedings on the bill.

Will we cast record votes this evening, for example, on the DURBIN amendment? How many additional record votes this evening? How long will we be in session this evening? And when do we intend to begin tomorrow, and with how many amendments?

Mr. ROTH. It is the intent, I say to the Senator from North Dakota, that

when the 10 hours expires today, to go out until tomorrow morning, at which time the amendments can be offered and voted upon.

Mr. DORGAN. Further reserving the right to object, is the intent of the chairman to have the additional recorded votes, for example on the DURBIN amendment?

Mr. ROTH. It is unclear at this time. I urge that we proceed, let the debate proceed, and we can work out the other details forthwith.

I move the adoption of my unanimous consent request.

Mr. KENNEDY. Reserving the right to object.

Mr. President, like many others here, I would like to just be able to get a short period of time. To be able to get on the early part of that queue, I would be glad. But I have an amendment with regard to tobacco tax. So I wanted to just make sure that we are going to even be able to discuss this or at least have some idea where we are to have that, too.

Mr. ROTH. Mr. President, in order to get things moving, let us proceed. Regular order. I urge Senator DURBIN to proceed to debate his amendment, and we can try to work out things.

Mr. KERRY. Mr. President, if I could just answer my senior colleague.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Illinois has the floor.

Mr. DURBIN. I am going to proceed. I hope that my colleagues will meet and discuss UC's, and Senator BOND and I would like to explain an important amendment.

Mr. FORD. Are we on 20?

Mr. DURBIN. I do not think we have any agreement at this moment.

Mr. KERRY. Would the Senator yield for one moment? I think we can get this locked in place.

Mr. DURBIN. I yield only for a question.

Mr. KERRY. Mr. President, will the Senator permit the Chair to hopefully rule on the unanimous-consent request that was proposed, during which time we will have whatever Democrat time, whatever time on this side of the aisle that remains, divided equally among everybody who has an amendment so that no Senator's preference goes over another, just divide it equally?

Mr. DURBIN. I say to my colleague from Massachusetts, I would be happy to do that, so long as I do not yield my right to the floor in the process.

Mr. ROTH. Mr. President, I move the adoption of my unanimous consent.

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, how much time would remain at the end? I am glad to divide it all up with my colleague, but how much time remains?

Mr. ROTH. Mr. President, I have been going around in a circle about 10 times now. I think the best thing to do is to let the Senator from Illinois proceed with the debate of his amendment, and we can try to work out further agreements subsequently.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Illinois has the floor.

Mr. DURBIN. Thank you, Mr. President.

AMENDMENT NO. 519

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, this amendment was offered last night. It is an amendment which I think most Members are conversant with because it is not a new issue. This is an issue which has been literally before Congress for almost 50 years.

It is an issue of rank discrimination. It is an issue of unfairness. It is an issue of inequality. And it goes to the heart of protecting American families.

The issue at hand is the deductibility of health insurance premiums.

Those Americans fortunate enough to work for corporations, employees and management, enjoy a 100 percent deductibility of all health insurance premiums. I think that is good policy. It encourages health insurance protection. It protects families.

If you happen to be one of the 23 million Americans who are self-employed and you buy health insurance for your family, your tax deductibility is 40 percent. What does that mean? It means, unfortunately, a higher percentage of self-employed people and their families are uninsured. It means that the children, of course, of these self-employed do not have health insurance protection, and it basically means a discrimination in our Tax Code which should have been removed long ago.

There are those who have argued for gradualism. Let us very, very slowly, in a glacial-like pace reach the day when we have equality and parity, 100 percent deduction for all Americans.

I am happy to be joined by my colleague from Missouri, Senator KIT BOND, and also my other colleagues who have said that they think as I do, that it is time for us to end this inequality and to give real parity and fairness so that both the self-employed and those working for other businesses have the same opportunity for 100 percent tax deduction.

I ask unanimous consent Senators BOND, DORGAN, DASCHLE, HARKIN, BOXER, MIKULSKI and JOHNSON be added as cosponsors of my amendment No. 519.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. DURBIN. Let me say at this point, too, it is easy to come before this body and to propose new tax benefits. We know the difficult part, the offsets—how do you pay for them?

I have come up with a means of paying for this which I think you can detect has some controversy attached to it, but I think it is reasonable. It would impose an additional 11-cent-per-package tax on cigarettes sold in America and a parallel percentage increase on spit tobacco and snuff.

Now, the bill proposed by the Senate Finance Committee already raised the Federal tax on tobacco and cigarettes, for example, from 24 cents to 44 cents. This bill would add an additional 11 cents. Make no mistake, it is a tax. For